

## POETRY.

From *Neals' Boudoir Gazette*.  
THE FIRST FIRE OF WINTER.  
BY CHARLES GRENELL.

When winter is come and the first fire is lighted,  
What lovely emotions rush home to the heart;  
How sweet recollections of yore's fondly plighted,  
Compel us to linger, 'ere evening departs.  
The spirit of merriment, affection and gladness,  
Through clustering around us all cheerful and bright,  
While Love and Joy bid the demon of sadness  
Awaunt with its cares to the shades of the night.

The first fire of winter: how bright and how cheering,  
Is the light which it sheds around the clean hearth;  
How food are the hopes, and how soft and endearing,  
The pleasing reflections to which it gives birth.

There parents and children, youth, childhood and hoariness,  
Are mingling their voices, their laughter and smiles;  
While contentment and peace, protection and duty,  
Each bosom enraptures, each sorrow beguiles.

Oh, blessed communion, how exulting in bliss,  
And merriment with its crackling cold winter storm.

While pass in the corner pure soft and cozy,  
Content on the hearth rug so pleasant and warm,  
With no fears to afflict her, or cares to molest,  
She needs not the threat'ning wind or of rain.

With Fido the dog, she sinks to her rest,  
In friendship to slumber till morning again.

"THE GRAVE-DIGGER!"  
NOT TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.  
"Old man! old man! for whom dig'st thou this grave?"

I asked as I walked along;  
For I saw in the heart of London streets  
A dark and a busy throng.

"Twas a strange wild deed!—but a wilder wish  
Of the parted soul, to lie  
Midst the troubled numbers of living men,  
Who would pass him idly by!

So I said, "Old man for whom dig'st thou this grave,  
In the heart of London town?"  
And the deep-toned voice of the Digger replied,  
"We're laying a gas-pipe down!"

## MISCELLANEOUS.

THE GUNSMITH OF ORLEANS,  
OR  
THE DEAD WOMAN'S SECRET

BY MRS. ELIZA SHERIDAN.

CHAPTER I.

In an humble street in Paris, occupying the third floor of a respectable house, lived the hero and heroine of the present tale, Cephise and Richard Morin.

They were Orphans; brother and sister; Richard was by some years the elder, Cephise having just attained her nineteenth year. Their mother, on her dying bed, bequeathed the sister to the brother's care, with an earnestness that long left its impression on the heart of Richard, and that he faithfully adhered to his mother's appeal of protection for her daughter, will be seen in the events which follow.

After his mother's death—his father having died while he was yet young, Richard found a situation for his sister with a respectable milliner and dress-maker, with whom she remained until she had learned the business in all its branches. Richard then took the apartments where himself and Cephise now resided; she, attending to their little household arrangements, and doing needle work for the store of Madame Dumas, while he was engaged as journeyman gunsmith, by a master whom he had served for eight years, and who thought highly of him, both as a man and workman. Indeed, the two Orphans possessed among their friends and neighbors, high characters for virtue, honesty, and industry.

Cephise sat at work in the principal room of their little dwelling, every thing around her bespeaking neatness and order. A small work-table stood at her side, on which lay all the implements requisite for her occupation. The manufacture of some dresses were to be completed by the following day.

There was a restless anxiety in the hurried manner of drawing forth her needle to the detriment of the thread, which broke at every stitch or two. The clock struck the hour of three, and as the last stroke reverberated through the apartment, she threw down her work, rose hastily from her seat, and listened as if to catch the sound of a step—"Some one ascends the stairs!"—It's Edward, perhaps!—A pause of a second, and the footsteps passed on to the floor above. With the same air of uneasiness, she resumed her work, still gazing as she from time to time raised her eyes from her employment to wipe away a tear.

"Two whole days and I have not seen him! two days!—what an age!"—'Tis the first time he has ever staid away so long; he will not come to-day he knows 'tis near the hour my brother comes to dinner. I long to see him to talk over our love, and the prospects of our marriage, and to learn when he will inform my dear Richard of his intentions. His employment surely could not have detained him so long; he has been from home all night too, for I have watched his window open and shut, and saw no light shine from it as usual. What can have happened? If he had not so strangely prohibited my avowing our love to Richard, I would entreat my brother to seek him out. Oh! why should this secrecy exist? this concealment of our affection; surely, he would not oppose the bestowal of my hand where I have already given my heart! I will tell Edward when next we meet, of my firm determination in having no longer any concealment from one who has been—so kind to me."

Appearing better satisfied with herself after forming the above resolution, she resumed her almost forgotten work which she had suffered to lie untouched upon her lap, when a knock at the door started her once more from her occupation.

A hurried "come in," and the door opened not to give admittance to the person Cephise half anticipated seeing, but to Madame Dumas.

"Ah," said Madame, "at work, eh, Cephise? I always find you with your needle in your hand. Your brother at his employment too, I suppose? Well, how do you do my dear?"

"Quite well, thank you, madam; I'm not late with my work, am I?—I think this dress was promised by to-morrow."

"It was," replied madam. "You are never behind your time, my good girl. 'Tis not to hasten your completion of this dress which brought me here; I am more anxious about the two wedding dresses."

"They are already cut, and will be finished at the appointed time," said Cephise.

"Those dresses," continued madam, "must change their destination. I have a hurried order from a family of distinction, for a wedding suit. Will you then, my good Cephise, for the credit of my establishment, sacrifice one night's rest to complete this order?"

"Willingly, madam. Have you the measure?"

"Exactly like those you have begun, only a little shorter, as the lady has a well turned ankle."

"I shall be particular, madam."

"The bride is from Orleans—her mother a baroness, and immensely rich," said the loquacious madam.

"From Orleans, did you say?"—and Cephise thought for an instant—"I once knew—but 'tis some time since—a rich baroness who resided in that part of the country; she had a daughter then about twelve years of age. Ah, I shall never forget them. I wonder if this is the same baroness; do you know the name, madam?"

"O, yes," said madam, taking a card from her pocket and reading the superscription "The Baroness Decourcy."

"'Tis she! 'Tis she!" exclaimed Cephise in an ecstasy of delight—"and her daughter's name is Leonie."

"How came you to the knowledge of persons in such high rank?" inquired madam.

"I'll tell you all about it, madam"—and Cephise began her simple tale.

"After leaving your employment, my brother and I had been about two years at our little housekeeping, when he was seized with an illness which threatened his life!—Alas! I tremble to think of the result. We were orphans without money or friends richer than ourselves. My tears were of no avail—they offered no relief. I knew not what to do, when an old and charitable neighbor who assisted me in the care of my brother, told me that a lady travelling with her daughter—to whom she had recommended me—desired me to wait upon her at the hotel. That day my brother was worse. I felt the necessity there was for exertion on my part, and summoning fortitude, I hastened to the hotel. They showed me many handsome dresses, and explained what they wished done. I tried to listen to their orders without betraying my emotion, and in spite of my efforts to repress them, tears rushed to my eyes. The lady looked astonished, and kindly inquired the cause of my anxiety. I told her all. She ordered her carriage, and bidding me enter it with her, drove to the humble habitation of my poor suffering brother. She endeavored to cheer and encourage the invalid, and at her departure left us gold! yes, gold! to supply the many wants of my poor brother!—He at length recovered, and 'tis to that angel of goodness I owe all my present happiness—the Baroness Decourcy, she whom I shall now work for with so much pleasure. O! take me with you when you go with the dresses, will you dear madam Dumas?"

"Surely, surely, if you wish it," said madam. "I have promised the dress by twelve o'clock to-morrow; you shall accompany me then."

At this moment voices were heard outside of the door, as if in warm discussion. Cephise's heart beat as she listened in fearful expectation of hearing the sound of his voice. Her anxiety was quickly relieved when she heard the well known tones of her brother's voice, speaking to a fellow workman and companion of his.

Madame Dumas, with a kind good morning, entered and passed her with a polite salutation. He threw himself into a chair—his countenance appeared flushed. Cephise took his hand, and kindly inquired what had disturbed him.

"Nothing, nothing, dearest sister; see I brought you a trifle; 'tis your birthday—"

and taking from his bosom a small casket, displayed to her view a necklace and bracelets.

"Dear Richard," said Cephise, "you will quite spoil me! I should ever get a husband he would never be so indulgent as you are!"

Richard's brow lowered—"Do you think of marriage, Cephise? Are we not happy as we are?"

"Yes," faltered Cephise, "very happy."

"Tell me, Cephise, will you promise never to leave me—never to marry, if I take a vow of celibacy? You shall be mistress of our little dwelling, the purse and myself!"

"And would you, dear Richard, be content to devote your life to your sister?"

"Hear me, Cephise. I am not the disinterested brother you think me; there is much of selfishness in my affection. 'Tis my happiness I fear to lose, in losing you. 'Tis now nine years since our mother died; you were then scarcely more than a child. Her dying words were—'Be a father to your infant sister.' The week after she died, I set to work with the hope of gaining sufficient to educate and provide you with a marriage portion. I laid by something from week to week. In a few years you grew too pretty to remain longer at the milliner's. I procured a home, and here we have lived happy in each other's love, and in you and this little home is comprised all I hold dear on earth; judge then the vacuum your absence would create."

Poor Cephise checked a rising sigh as she thought of Edward—"But if a good and honorable man, dear Richard, loved me, would you then object to my marrying?"—and she listened for his reply with an anxiety she could ill disguise.

"No, no, not if you wished it. But pause, you are not in love yet"—Cephise bent her head to conceal a blush—"so there's no chance of marriage—love, dinner, dearest, dinner! I must lack to work."

Their little table was soon spread, and they prepared to despatch their frugal meal.

"O! By the by," said Cephise, "allow for our sex's characteristic curiosity, and tell me what was the subject of your discussion with Julien, on the stairs, as you came in?"

"We were speaking of a circumstance that occurred this morning. Julien and I were left in charge of the shop, when two young men of fashion, came in to examine some pistols; while making choice, a third fashionable joined them, and with the voice of a hunter, cried, 'aha, Count Chevalier, how are you?'"

and with a hearty lap on the shoulder of the one he called 'count' he continued—"my dear fellow, how comes on your little amour with the pretty sempstress?—Have you ended the romance, or do you still act the disguised innamorato?"

In short, dear Cephise, we learnt from conversation, that this count, in disguise, and under a false name, was seeking the ruin of a young sempstress, poor, but virtuous; that which they spoke of as mere pleasantry, I looked upon as a crime! My heart throbbed quickly, my hands rested on my work, and I half raised myself to confront this villain nobleman, when at that moment he enjoined silence on his companions as he said he was 'to be married in three days!'"

"To the poor sempstress?" hastily inquired Cephise, as she listened with breathless attention.

"No! Not to the good and virtuous girl who toils for that subsistence she will not gain by infamy, but to one of noble birth! Ah! I have no patience to think that to the world, high birth and wealth are passports to vice! a sanction to crime! and are the means of spreading destruction among our poor but honest families, of bringing misery and ruin upon our wives and sisters!"

"Do you know the name of this man Richard?"

"I have his address where the pistols are to be sent, and handing a richly embossed card to Cephise, she read the name of Count Theodore Percival. Neither of them had ever heard the name before."

"I must now to my forge and files," said Richard, rising. "I'll make as much haste to return as soon as possible; bless you, bless you, Cephise,"—and snatching up his hat, Richard darted down stairs, and was at his accustomed work in a few seconds.

Cephise sat in deep thought. The fate of the poor sempstress possessed her mind.

"Yet, after all, she may be in fault; a young woman in her situation should not listen to the love of one of high rank. But then he is in disguise, and she was not to blame—yet how easy to see where deceit guides the action! In my case, for example, I have nothing to fear. Edward has told me all. Neither richer or higher in life than I, he loves, and seeks me for his wife! At this moment her meditations were interrupted by the door slowly opening, and a young man, habited like a mechanic, entered the apartment. He looked anxiously round as if to assure himself Cephise was alone, then hastily taking her hand in his, he affectionately inquired how she had been, since last they met.

"Well, quite well. But where have you been so long, dear Edward?"

"I have been deeply engaged in my employment, dearest," he replied, "and out of town on business, from whence I am but just returned. I shall be compelled to absent myself again shortly, but only for a few days, to settle some family arrangements."

"I thought you had no family Edward."

Edward's face flushed to the temples as he hesitatingly replied—"Only an am dear, who wishes to have a will drawn up, and desires my presence as a witness; that done, I shall return and pass with you the happiest hours of my life!"

"But henceforth, Edward, it must be only with my brother's sanction that I encourage your addresses; give me leave then to tell him all our prospects."

"Not yet, dear Cephise; mystery has always a charm for lovers, and 'tis only a momentary obstacle which forces me still to conceal our projects. From this hour I expect to inherit property which should I marry without her consent, falls to another heir."

"I only ask to make my brother the confidant of my happiness. It is my wish—may, my duty so to do. Judge what my feelings would be, did he learn from another that which I should have been the first to disclose."

"And would you be satisfied, dear Cephise, with the cold and formal interviews which the presence of a third person naturally imposes? The warm and buoyant feelings of our hearts repressed, and our present freedom changed to silent bondage. O! Cephise, if you loved me—"

"If I loved you, Edward! that word conveys a reproach I do not merit."

"Listen to me, Cephise, grant me an interview to-morrow—the last secret one I shall ever ask—may, do not deny me. I have much to say to you, and after that, you shall be free to disclose to Richard all our love."

A knock was heard at the lower street door.

"Quick—leave me! leave me Edward unless you wish to face my brother."

"Promise me an interview to-morrow?"

"I do! I do! Now leave me I implore you—ah! you are too late."

Edward retreated towards the door, and as it opened to admit Richard, favored by the twilight and dexterity, it gave egress to Edward, who softly descended the stairs, and gently closing the house door after him, found himself once more in safety in the open street.

Richard addressed his sister.

"Here I am, Cephise. I promised a speedy return. Why haven't you a light 'tis a gloomy day without, and rendered doubly gloomy by having no light within."

"I—I was waiting your return, Richard—I have something to say to you—something I must say to-night!"

And Cephise determined to disclose all to Richard, and be no longer the guilty thing she felt herself. Richard asked

the cause of her agitation, but ere she could reply, a low tap at the chamber door startled them. Richard unlatched the door, on the threshold of which stood a venerable looking man of most benign aspect. He inquired if 'this was the residence of Richard Morin.' And answer in the affirmative brought him a few steps further into the apartment.

"Cephise, a light," said Richard, handing the stranger a seat. The light was instantly procured, and as its ray fell upon the countenance of the old man, Richard exclaimed, "tis he Cephise our good father Antoine!"

"You remember me, then, my good children?" said the father.

"Aye, do we," replied Richard. "You raised our mother's dying head as with the glassy eye of approaching dissolution she took her last look of her poor orphans."

"My visit now to these orphans," said the priest, "is neither one of chance, ceremony or curiosity. I am here to comply with a sacred promise made that dying mother, but I can only explain myself in the absence of your sister."

"Let her presence be no hindrance, good father; we have no secrets one from the other."

"Nevertheless, you alone must be the master of the one I have now to disclose."

Richard kindly dismissed his sister to her little apartment, and as he led her to the door, she bid him summons her the instant Father Antoine was gone; and she added, "I too have a secret for your private ear, dear Richard, the revealing of which will relieve my heart of a weight it now labors under."

Richard closed the door, and drawing a chair near Father Antoine, waited the disclosure of the coming secret.

The good man drew from under his gray gown a small wallet which he laid upon the table, and thus began.

"Tis now nine years since I was sent to attend your mother's dying bed, and received her confession; as I prayed Heaven to grant her the pardon she implored for, the expiring woman with much difficulty drew from under her pillow a sealed packet, and putting it into my hands, spoke these words:

"Father this is my will. In the name of Heaven promise to take charge—exclusive charge of it!—I promised, and she continued, 'Tis nothing of value I leave, for I am poor.' 'Tis a long concealed secret I do not wish my children to know. Cephise is now ten years of age; if before her nineteenth birthday, my daughter should marry, do you open that paper; your own conscience will direct you how to act. Should she attain that age without quitting her brother's protection, you, father find out my son, see him alone give him that packet to be opened before me, and as regards the secret, certain, I leave him to act as his own heart shall dictate, with the aid of your advice!"

"My dear mother's will shall be strictly obeyed. Speak, Father, what are her requests?"

Father Antoine selected a small sealed packet from the wallet, and handed it to Richard, who pressed it to his lips with reverence, then hastily breaking the seal, he read as follows:

"Feeling assured of my approaching death, before God—my conscience—and you, my son I declare the disclosure I am about to make to be sincere and veritable; do not call me culpable, if I have done wrong, you at least, my son, will pardon me."

"Read, Father, for I cannot,"

Father Antoine took the paper and continued,

"Heaven is witness to the truth of what I have affirmed. Cephise Morin died ten years ago. The child I have left is not my daughter."

Richard's heart beat fondly. His blood rushed rapidly through his veins!

"Go on, Father, go on!"

The old man continued,

"I was a widow, and poor Charles, my son, away at school when my daughter Cephise was born. Misery and misfortune rendered my constitution unfit for nursing my child, and it died! Just six months after I took my child to the Baptismal font, I followed her to the grave. It was night and raining fast. I threw myself on my knees by the grave of my daughter. At that moment I heard the cry of an infant. I searched among the leaves from whence the cry proceeded, and there lay a child as if just thrown there. It was night and raining fast. I threw myself on my knees by the grave of my daughter. At that moment I heard the cry of an infant. I searched among the leaves from whence the cry proceeded, and there lay a child as if just thrown there. It was night and raining fast. I threw myself on my knees by the grave of my daughter. At that moment I heard the cry of an infant. I searched among the leaves from whence the cry proceeded, and there lay a child as if just thrown there."

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